



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 51728

Native guides lead 2d Raider Battalion Marines on a combat/reconnaissance patrol behind Japanese lines. The patrol lasted for less than a month, during which the Marines covered 150 miles and fought more than a dozen actions.

enemy. They killed nearly 500 Japanese. Their own losses were 16 killed and 18 wounded.

The Aola Bay venture, which had provided the 2d Raider Battalion a starting point for its month-long jungle campaign, proved a bust. The site chosen for a new airfield was unsuitable, too wet and unstable, and the whole force moved to Koli Point in early December, where another airfield eventually was constructed.

The buildup on Guadalcanal continued, by both sides. On 11 November, guarded by a cruiser-destroyer covering force, a convoy ran in carrying the 182d Infantry, another regiment of the Americal Division. The ships were pounded by enemy bombers and three transports were hit, but the men landed. General Vandegrift needed the new men badly. His veterans were truly ready for replacement; more than a thousand new cases of malaria and related diseases were reported each week. The Japanese who had been on the island

any length of time were no better off; they were, in fact, in worse shape. Medical supplies and rations were in short supply. The whole thrust of the Japanese reinforcement effort continued to be to get troops and combat equipment ashore. The idea prevailed in Tokyo, despite all evidence to the contrary, that one overwhelming coordinated assault would crush the American resistance. The enemy drive to take Port Moresby on New Guinea was put on hold to concentrate all efforts on driving the Americans off of Guadalcanal.

On 12 November, a multifaceted Japanese naval force converged on Guadalcanal to cover the landing of the main body of the 38th Division. Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan's cruisers and destroyers, the close-in protection for the 182d's transports, moved to stop the enemy. Coastwatcher and scout plane sightings and radio traffic intercepts had identified two battleships, two carriers, four cruisers, and a host of destroy-

ers all headed toward Guadalcanal. A bombardment group led by the battleships *Hiei* and *Kirishima*, with the light cruiser *Nagura*, and 15 destroyers spearheaded the attack. Shortly after midnight, near Savo Island, Callaghan's cruisers picked up the Japanese on radar and continued to close. The battle was joined at such short range that each side fired at times on their own ships. Callaghan's flagship, the *San Francisco*, was hit 15 times, Callaghan was killed, and the ship had to limp away. The cruiser *Atlanta* (CL 104) was also hit and set afire. Rear Admiral Norman Scott, who was on board, was killed. Despite the hammering by Japanese fire, the Americans held and continued fighting. The battleship *Hiei*, hit by more than 80 shells, retired and with it went the rest of the bombardment force. Three destroyers were sunk and four others damaged.

The Americans had accomplished their purpose; they had forced the



Department of Defense (Navy) Photos 80-G-20824 and 80G-21099

In the great naval Battle of Guadalcanal, 12-15 November, heavy cruiser San Francisco (CA 38) took 15 major hits and RAdm Daniel J. Callaghan was killed when his flagship, the was forced to limp away in the dark from the scene of action.

Japanese to turn back. The cost was high. Two antiaircraft cruisers, the *Atlanta* and the *Juneau* (CL 52), were sunk; four destroyers, the *Barton* (DD 599), *Cushing* (DD 376), *Monssen* (DD 436), and *Laffey* (DD 459), also went to the bottom. In addition to the *San Francisco*, the heavy cruiser *Portland* (CA 33) and the destroyers *Sterret* (DD 407) and *Aaron Ward* (DD 483) were damaged. Only one destroyer of the 13 American ships engaged, the *Fletcher* (DD 445), was unscathed when the survivors retired to the New Hebrides.

With daylight came the Cactus bombers and fighters; they found the crippled *Hiei* and pounded it mercilessly. On the 14th the Japanese were forced to scuttle it. Admiral Halsey ordered his only surviving carrier, the *Enterprise*, out of the Guadalcanal area to get it out of reach of Japanese aircraft and sent his battleships *Washington* (BB 56) and *South Dakota* (BB 55) with four escorting destroyers north to meet the Japanese. Some of the *Enterprise's* planes flew in to Henderson Field to help even the odds.

On 14 November Cactus and *Enterprise* flyers found a Japanese cruiser-destroyer force that had pounded the island on the night of 13 November. They damaged four cruisers and a destroyer. After refueling and rearming they went after the approaching Japanese troop convoy. They hit several transports in one attack and sank one when they came back again. Army B-17s up from Espiritu Santo scored one hit and several near misses, bombing from 17,000 feet.

Moving in a continuous pattern of attack, return, refuel, rearm, and attack again, the planes from Guadalcanal hit nine transports, sinking seven. Many of the 5,000 troops on the stricken ships were rescued by Tanaka's destroyers, which were firing furiously and laying smoke screens in an attempt to protect the transports. The admiral later recalled that day as indelible in his mind, with memories of "bombs wobbling down from high-flying B-17s; of carrier bombers roaring towards targets as though to plunge full into the water, releasing bombs and pulling

out barely in time, each miss sending up towering clouds of mist and spray, every hit raising clouds of smoke and fire." Despite the intensive aerial attack, Tanaka continued on to Guadalcanal with four destroyers and four transports.

Japanese intelligence had picked up the approaching American battleship force and warned Tanaka of its advent. In turn, the enemy admirals sent their own battleship-cruiser force to intercept. The Americans, led by Rear Admiral Willis A. Lee in the *Washington*, reached Sealark Channel about 2100 on the 14th. An hour later, a Japanese cruiser was picked up north of Savo. Battleship fire soon turned it away. The Japanese now learned that their opponents would not be the cruisers they expected.

The resulting clash, fought in the glare of gunfire and Japanese searchlights, was perhaps the most significant fought at sea for Guadalcanal. When the melee was over, the American battleships' 16-inch guns had more than matched the Japanese. Both the *South Dakota* and the *Washington* were damaged badly

The Japanese Model 89 (1929) 50mm Heavy Grenade Discharger

Born out of the need to bridge the gap in range between hand grenades and mortars, the grenade discharger evolved in the Imperial Japanese Army from a special purpose weapon of infantry assault and defense to an essential item of standard equipment with all Japanese ground forces.

Commonly called *Juteki* by the Japanese, this weapon officially was designated *Hachikyu Shiki Jutekidarto*, or 1189 Model Heavy Grenade Discharger, the term "heavy" being justified by the powerful 1-pound, 12-ounce high explosive shell it was designed to fire, although it also fired the standard Model 91 fragmentation grenade.

To the American Marines and soldiers who first encountered this weapon and others of its kind in combat they were known as "knee mortars," likely so named because they generally were fired from a kneeling position. Typically, the discharger's concave baseplate was pressed firmly into the surface of the ground by the firer's foot to support the heavy recoil of the fired shell, but unfortunately the term "knee mortar" suggested to some untutored captors of these weapons that they were to be fired with the baseplate resting against the knee or thigh. When a Marine fired one of these dischargers from his thigh and broke his upper leg bone, efforts were swiftly undertaken in the field to educate all combat troops in the safe and proper handling of these very useful weapons.

The Model 89 (1929) 50mm Heavy Grenade Discharger is a muzzle-loaded, high-angle-of-fire weapon which weighs 10-1/4 pounds and is 24 inches in overall length. Its design is compact and simple. The discharger has three major components: the rifled barrel, the supporting barrel pedestal with firing mechanism, and the base plate. Operation of the Model 89 was easy and straightforward, and with practice its user could deliver accurate fire registered quickly on target.

Encountered in all major battles in the Pacific War, the Model 89 Grenade Discharger was an uncomplicated, very portable, and highly efficient weapon operated easily by one man. It was carried in a cloth or leather case with a sling, and its one-piece construction allowed it to be brought into action very quickly. This grenade discharger had the advantage over most mortars in that it could be aimed and fired mechanically after a projectile had been



placed in the barrel, projectile firing not being dependent upon dropping down the barrel against a stationary firing pin as with most mortars, where barrel fouling sometimes caused dangerous hangfires. Although an instantaneous fuze employed on the Model 89 high explosive shell restricted this shell's use to open areas, the Model 91 fragmentation grenade with its seven-second fuze made this discharger effective in a jungle or forest setting, with complete safety for the user from premature detonation of projectiles by overhanging foliage. Smoke and signal shells, and an incendiary grenade, were special types of ammunition used with this versatile and effective weapon which won the respect of all who came to know it.—Edwin F. Libby

enough to force their retirement, but the *Kirishima* was punished to its abandonment and death. One Japanese and three American destroyers, the *Benham* (DD 796), the *Walke* (DD 416), and the *Preston* (DD 379), were sunk. When the

Japanese attack force retired, Admiral Tanaka ran his four transports onto the beach, knowing they would be sitting targets at daylight. Most of the men on board, however, did manage to get ashore before the inevitable pounding by American

planes, warships, and artillery.

Ten thousand troops of the 38th Division had landed, but the Japanese were in no shape to ever again attempt a massive reinforcement. The horrific losses in the frequent naval clashes, which seemed at



Department of Defense (USMC) Photo 53510

A Japanese troop transport and her landing craft were badly damaged by the numerous Marine air attacks and were forced to run aground on Kokumbona beach after the naval Battle of Guadalcanal. Many enemy troops were killed in the attacks.

times to favor the Japanese, did not really represent a standoff. Every American ship lost or damaged could and would be replaced; every Japanese ship lost meant a steadily diminishing fleet. In the air, the losses on both sides were daunting, but the enemy naval air arm would never recover from its losses of experienced carrier pilots. Two years later, the Battle of the Philippine Sea between American and Japanese carriers would aptly be called the "Marianas Turkey Shoot" because of the ineptitude of the Japanese trainee pilots.

The enemy troops who had been fortunate enough to reach land were not immediately ready to assault the American positions. The 38th Division and the remnants of the various Japanese units that had previously tried to penetrate the Marine lines needed to be shaped into a coherent attack force before General Hyakutake could again attempt to take Henderson Field.

General Vandegrift now had enough fresh units to begin to replace his veteran troops along the front lines. The decision to replace the 1st Marine Division with the Army's 25th Infantry Division had been

made. Admiral Turner had told Vandegrift to leave all of his heavy equipment on the island when he did pull out "in hopes of getting your units re-equipped when you come out." He also told the Marine general that the Army would command the final phases of the Guadalcanal operation since it would provide the majority of the combat forces once the 1st Division departed. Major General Alexander M. Patch, commander of the Americal Division, would relieve Vandegrift as senior American officer ashore. His air support would continue to be Marine-dominated as General Geiger, now located on Espiritu Santo with 1st Wing headquarters, fed his squadrons forward to maintain the offensive. And the air command on Guadalcanal itself would continue to be a mixed bag of Army, Navy, Marine, and Allied squadrons.

The sick list of the 1st Marine Division in November included more than 3,200 men with malaria. The men of the 1st still manning the frontline foxholes and the rear areas — if anyplace within Guadalcanal's perimeter could properly be called a rear area — were plain worn

out. They had done their part and they knew it.

On 29 November, General Vandegrift was handed a message from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The crux of it read: "1st MarDiv is to be relieved without delay . . . and will proceed to Australia for rehabilitation and employment." The word soon spread that the 1st was leaving and where it was going. Australia was not yet the cherished place it would become in the division's future, but *any* place was preferable to Guadalcanal.

December and the Final Stages

On 7 December, one year after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, General Vandegrift sent a message to all men under his command in the Guadalcanal area thanking them for their courage and steadfastness, commending particularly the pilots and "all who labored and sweated within the lines in all manner of prodigious and vital tasks." He reminded them all that their "unbelievable achievements had made 'Guadalcanal' a synonym for death and disaster in the language of our enemy." On 9 December, he handed over his command to General Patch and flew out to Aus-

tralia at the same time the first elements of the 5th Marines were boarding ship. The 1st, 11th, and 7th Marines would soon follow together with all the division's supporting units. The men who were leaving were thin, tired, hollow-eyed, and apathetic; they were young men who had grown old in four months time. They left behind 681 dead in the island's cemetery.

The final regiment of the Americal Division, the 132d Infantry, landed on 8 December as the 5th Marines was preparing to leave. The 2d Marine Division's regiments already on

As he tells it, "Too Many, Too Close, Too Long," is Donald L. Dickson's portrait of one of the "little guys, just plain worn out. His stamina and his spirit stretched beyond human endurance. He has had no real sleep for a long time And he probably hasn't stopped ducking and fighting long enough to discover that he has malaria. He is going to discover it now, however. He is through."

Captain Donald L. Dickson, USMCR



U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo SC164898

Americal Division commander, MajGen Alexander M. Patch, Jr., watches while his troops and supplies are staged on Guadalcanal's beaches on 8 December, the day before he relieved Gen Vandegrift and his wornout 1st Marine Division.

the island, the 2d, 8th, and part of the 10th, knew that the 6th Marines was on its way to rejoin. It seemed to many of the men of the 2d Marines, who had landed on D-Day, 7 August, that they, too, should be leaving. These took slim comfort in the thought that they, by all rights, should be the first of the 2d to depart the island whenever that hoped-for day came.

General Patch received a steady stream of ground reinforcements and replacements in December. He was not ready yet to undertake a full-scale offensive until the 25th Division and the rest of the 2d Marine Division arrived, but he kept all frontline units active in combat and reconnaissance patrols, particularly toward the western flank.

The island commander's air defense capabilities also grew substantially. Cactus Air Force, or-

ganized into a fighter command and a strike (bomber) command, now operated from a newly redesignated Marine Corps Air Base. The Henderson Field complex included a new airstrip, Fighter Two, which replaced Fighter One, which had severe drainage problems. Brigadier General Louis Woods, who had taken over as senior aviator when Geiger returned to Espiritu Santo, was relieved on 26 December by Brigadier General Francis P. Mulcahy, Commanding General, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing. New fighter and bomber squadrons from both the 1st and 2d Wings sent their flight echelons forward on a regular basis. The Army added three fighter squadrons and a medium bomber squadron of B-26s. The Royal New Zealand Air Force flew in a reconnaissance squadron of Lockheed Hudsons. And the U.S. Navy sent forward a squadron of Consolidat-

The 'George' Medal

The George Medal is legendary among 1st Marine Division veterans of Guadalcanal. Only about 50 were cast, in Australia, before the mold gave out.

The medal commemorates the difficult situation of the division during the early days on Guadalcanal, when ammunition, food, and heavy equipment were short and the Japanese plentiful. When the issue was no longer in doubt, Marines had time to reflect on the D-plus-3 Navy withdrawal in the face of increasing Japanese air attacks and surface action which left the division in such a tight spot.

In the recollection of then-Captain Donald L. Dickson, adjutant of the 5th Marines, the Division G-3, then-Lieutenant Colonel Merrill B. Twining, resolved to commemorate the occasion. Twining told artist Dickson in general terms what he had in mind. Dickson went to work designing an appropriate medal using a fifty-cent piece to draw a circle on a captured Japanese blank military postcard.

Dickson's design was approved and when the division got to Australia a mold was made by a local metal craftsman and a small number were cast before the mold became unserviceable. Those wanting a medal paid one Australian pound for it and received a certificate as well. The medals are now an even greater rarity than at the time. In recent years, reproductions have been cast, and can be identified by the different metal and a poor definition of details.

The obverse design shows a hand and sleeve dropping a hot potato in the shape of Guadalcanal into the arms of

a grateful Marine. In the original design the sleeve bore the stripes of a vice admiral intended to be either Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, ComSoPac, or Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, Commander Joint Expeditionary Force, but the final medal diplomatically omitted this identification.

Also on the obverse is a Saguaro cactus, indigenous to Arizona, not Guadalcanal, but representing the code name for the island, "Cactus." The obverse inscription is *Facia Georgius*, "Let George Do It." Thus it became known as the George Medal.

The medal's reverse pictures a cow (the original design showed a Japanese soldier with breeches down) and an electric fan, and is inscribed: "In fond remembrance of the happy days spent from Aug. 7th 1942 to Jan. 5th 1943. U.S.M.C."

The suspension ribbon was made, appropriately, of the pale green herringbone twill from some Marine's utility uniform. Legend has it that to be authentic the utilities from which the ribbons were made had to have been washed in the waters of Guadalcanal's Lunga River. Some medals were provided with the oversized safety pin used to identify laundry bags in Navy shipboard laundries.

Such unofficial commemorative mementoes are not uncommon in military circles and recall, among others, the Sookchow Creek medals recognizing the defense of Shanghai's International Settlement during the Japanese invasions of 1932 and 1937 which were inspired by the Military Order of the Dragon medals of veterans of the China Relief Expedition or Boxer Rebellion.—*Brooke Nihart*



ed PBY Catalina patrol planes which had a much needed night-flying capability.

The aerial buildup forced the Japanese to curtail all air attacks and made daylight naval reinforcement attempts an event of the past. The nighttime visits of the Tokyo Express destroyers now brought only supplies encased in metal drums which were rolled over the ships' sides in hope they would float into shore. The men ashore desperately needed everything that could be sent, even by this method, but most of the drums never reached the beaches.

Still, however desperate the enemy situation was becoming, he was prepared to fight. General Hyakutake continued to plan the seizure of the airfield. General Hitoshi Imamura, commander of the *Eighth Area Army*, arrived in Rabaul on 2 December with orders to continue the offensive. He had 50,000 men to add to the embattled Japanese troops on Guadalcanal.

Before these new enemy units could be employed, the Americans were prepared to move out from the perimeter in their own offensive. Conscious that the Mt. Austen area was a continuing threat to his inland flank in any drive to the west, Patch committed the Americal's 132d Infantry to the task of clearing the mountain's wooded slopes on 17 December. The Army regiment succeeded in isolating the major Japanese force in the area by early January. The 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, took up hill positions to the southeast of the 132d to increase flank protection.

By this time, the 25th Infantry Division (Major General J. Lawton Collins) had arrived and so had the 6th Marines (6 January) and the rest of the 2d Division's headquarters and support troops. Brigadier General Alphonse De Carre, the Marine division's assistant commander, took charge of all Marine ground forces on the island. The 2d Division's com-

mander, Major General John Marston, remained in New Zealand because he was senior to General Patch.

With three divisions under his command, General Patch was designated Commanding General, XIV Corps, on 2 January. His corps headquarters numbered less than a score of officers and men, almost all taken from the Americal's staff. Brigadier General Edmund B. Sebree, who had already led both Army and Marine units in attacks on the Japanese, took command of the Americal Division. On 10 January, Patch gave the signal to start the strongest American offensive yet in the Guadalcanal campaign. The mission of the troops was simple and to the point: "Attack and destroy the Japanese forces remaining on Guadalcanal."

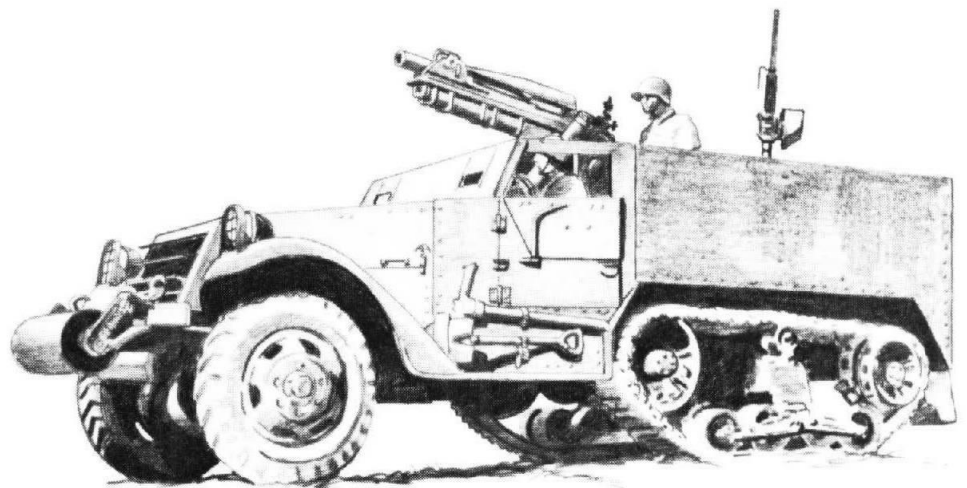
The initial objective of the corps' attack was a line about 1,000 to 1,500 yards west of jump-off positions. These ran inland from Point Cruz to the vicinity of Hill 66, about 3,000 yards from the beach. In order to reach Hill 66, the 25th Infantry Division attacked first with the 35th and 27th Infantry driving west and southwest across a scrambled series of ridges. The going was rough and the dug-in enemy, elements of two regiments of the *38th Division*, gave way reluctantly and slowly. By the 13th, however, the American sol-

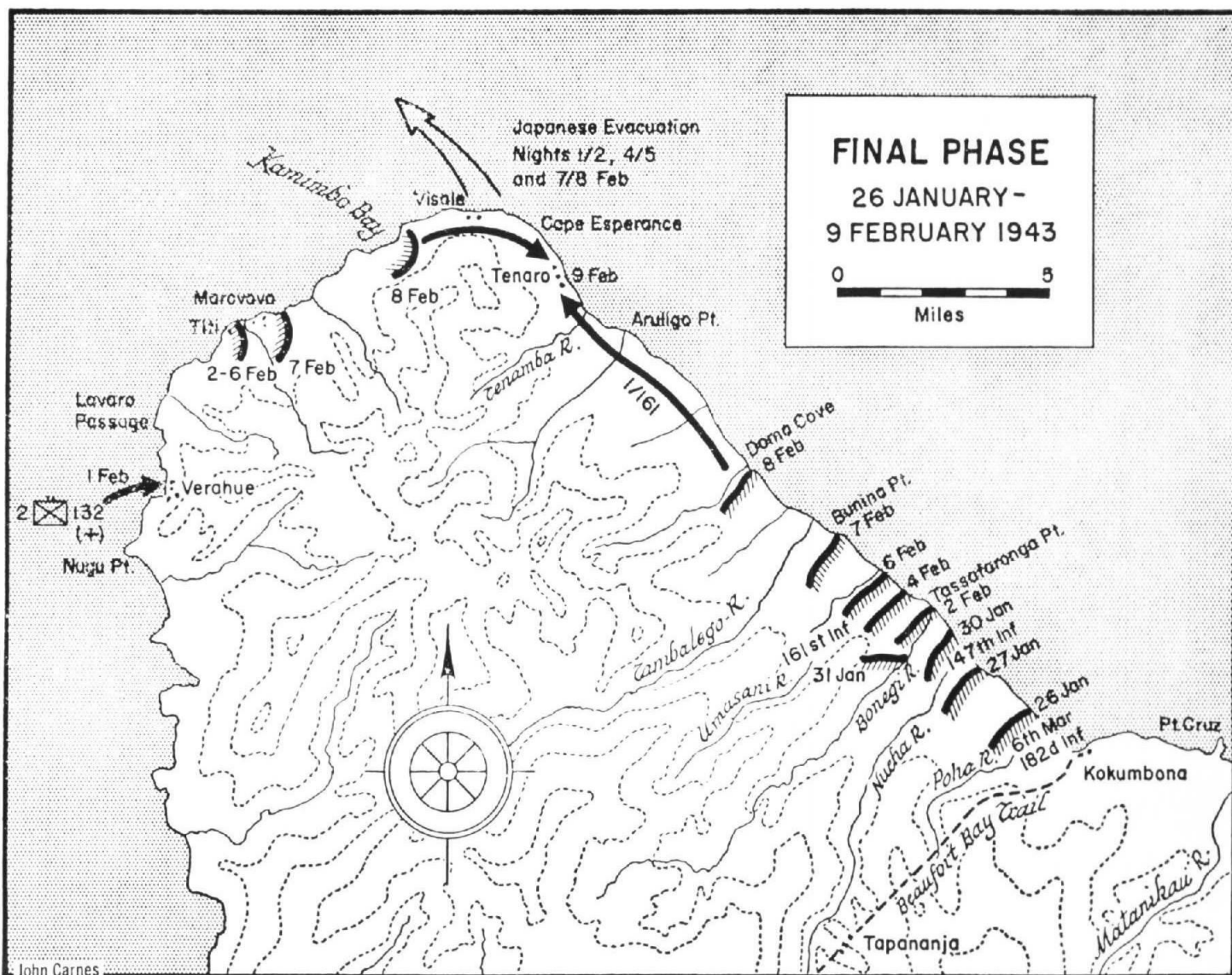
diers, aided by Marines of the 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, had won through to positions on the southern flank of the 2d Marine Division.

On 12 January, the Marines began their advance with the 8th Marines along the shore and 2d Marines inland. At the base of Point Cruz, in the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines' sector, regimental weapons company half-tracks ran over seven enemy machine gun nests. The attack was then held up by an extensive emplacement until the weapons company commander, Captain Henry P. "Jim" Crowe, took charge of a half-dozen Marine infantrymen taking cover from enemy fire with the classic remarks: "You'll never get a Purple Heart hiding in a fox hole. Follow me!" The men did and they destroyed the emplacement.

All along the front of the advancing assault companies the going was rough. The Japanese, remnants of the *Sendai Division*, were dug into the sides of a series of cross compartments and their fire took the Marines in the flank as they advanced. Progress was slow despite massive artillery support and naval gunfire from four destroyers offshore. In two days of heavy fighting, flamethrowers were employed for the first time and tanks were brought into play. The 2d Marines was now relieved and the 6th Marines moved into the attack along the coast while the 8th

U.S. Halftrack Mounting a 75mm Pack Howitzer and a .50-Caliber Air-Cooled Machine Gun





Marines took up the advance inland. Naval gunfire support, spotted by naval officers ashore, improved measurably. On the 15th, the Americans, both Army and Marine, reached the initial corps objective. In the Marine attack zone, 600 Japanese were dead.

The battle-weary 2d Marines had seen its last infantry action of Guadalcanal. A new unit now came into being, a composite Army-Marine division, or CAM division, formed from units of the Americal and 2d Marine Divisions. The directing staff was from the 2d Division, since the Americal had responsibility for the main perimeter. Two of its regiments, the 147th and the 182d Infantry, moved up to attack in line with the 6th Marines still along the coast. The 8th Marines was essential-

ly pinched out of the front lines by a narrowing attack corridor as the inland mountains and hills pressed closer to the coastal trail. The 25th Division, which was advancing across this rugged terrain, had the mission of outflanking the Japanese in the vicinity of Kokumbona, while the CAM division drove west. On the 23d, as the CAM troops approached Kokumbona, the 1st Battalion of the 27th Infantry struck north out of the hills and overran the village site and Japanese base. There was only slight but steady opposition to the American advance as the enemy withdrew west toward Cape Esperance.

The Japanese had decided, reluctantly, to give up the attempt to retake Guadalcanal. The orders were sent in the name of the Emperor and

senior staff officers were sent to Guadalcanal to ensure their acceptance. The Navy would make the final runs of the Tokyo Express, only this time in reverse, to evacuate the garrison so it could fight again in later battles to hold the Solomons.

Receiving intelligence that enemy ships were massing again to the northwest, General Patch took steps, as Vandegrift had before him on many occasions, to guard against overextending his forces in the face of what appeared to be another enemy attempt at reinforcement. He pulled the 25th Division back to bolster the main perimeter defenses and ordered the CAM division to continue its attack. When the Marines and soldiers moved out on 26 January, they had a surprisingly easy time of it, gaining 1,000 yards the first day

and 2,000 the following day. The Japanese were still contesting every attack, but not in strength.

By 30 January, the sole frontline unit in the American advance was the 147th Infantry; the 6th Marines held positions to its left rear.

The Japanese destroyer transports made their first run to the island on the night of 1-2 February, taking out 2,300 men from evacuation positions near Cape Esperance. On the night of 4-5 February, they returned and took out most of the *Sendai* survivors and General Hyakutake and his *Seventeenth Army* staff. The final evacuation operation was carried out on the night of 7-8 February, when a 3,000-man rear guard was embarked. In all, the Japanese with-

drew about 11,000 men in those three nights and evacuated about 13,000 soldiers from Guadalcanal overall. The Americans would meet many of these men again in later battles, but not the 600 evacuees who died, too worn and sick to survive their rescue.

On 9 February, American soldiers advancing from east and west met at Tenaro village on Cape Esperance. The only Marine ground unit still in action was the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, supporting the advance. General Patch could happily report the "complete and total defeat of Japanese forces on Guadalcanal." No organized Japanese units remained.

On 31 January, the 2d Marines and the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, boarded ship to leave Guadalcanal.

As was true with the 1st Marine Division, some of these men were so debilitated by malaria they had to be carried on board. All of them struck observers again as young men grown old "with their skins cracked and furrowed and wrinkled." On 9 February, the rest of the 8th Marines and a good part of the division supporting units boarded transports. The 6th Marines, thankfully only six weeks on the island, left on the 19th. All were headed for Wellington, New Zealand, the 2d Marines for the first time. Left behind on the island as a legacy of the 2d Marine Division were 263 dead.

The total cost of the Guadalcanal campaign to the American ground combat forces was 1,598 officers and men killed, 1,152 of them Marines.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt presents Gen Vandegrift the Medal of Honor for his heroic accomplishments against the

Japanese in the Solomons. Looking on are Mrs. Vandegrift, and the general's son, Maj Alexander A. Vandegrift, Jr.

National Archives Photo 208-PU-209V-4





The temporary resting place of a Marine killed in the fighting at Lunga Point is shown here. The grave marker was erected by his friends. The Marine's remains were later removed to the division cemetery on Guadalcanal, and further reburial at war's end either in his hometown or the Punchbowl National Cemetery in Hawaii with the honors due a fallen hero.

The wounded totaled 4,709, and 2,799 of these were Marines. Marine aviation casualties were 147 killed and 127 wounded. The Japanese in their turn lost close to 25,000 men on Guadalcanal, about half of whom were killed in action. The rest succumbed to illness, wounds, and starvation.

At sea, the comparative losses were about equal, with each side losing about the same number of fighting ships. The enemy loss of 2 battleships, 3 carriers, 12 cruisers, and 25 destroyers, was irreplaceable. The Allied ship losses, though costly, were not fatal; in essence, all ships lost were replaced. In the air, at least 600 Japanese planes were shot down; even more costly was the death of 2,300 experienced pilots and aircrewmen. The Allied plane losses were less than half the enemy's number and the pilot and aircrew losses substantially lower.

President Roosevelt, reflecting the

thanks of a grateful nation, awarded General Vandegrift the Medal of Honor for "outstanding and heroic accomplishment" in his leadership of American forces on Guadalcanal from 7 August to 9 December 1942. And for the same period, he awarded the Presidential Unit Citation to the 1st Marine Division (Reinforced) for "outstanding gallantry" reflecting "courage and determination . . . of an inspiring order." Included in the division's citation and award, besides the organic units of the 1st Division, were the 2d and 8th Marines and attached units of the 2d Marine Division, all of the Americal Division, the 1st Parachute and 1st and 2d Raider Battalions, elements of the 3d, 5th, and 14th Defense Battalions, the 1st Aviation Engineer Battalion, the 6th Naval Construction Battalion, and two motor torpedo boat squadrons. The indispensable Cactus Air Force was included, also represented by 7 Marine headquarters and service

squadrons, 16 Marine flying squadrons, 16 Navy flying squadrons, and 5 Army flying squadrons.

The victory at Guadalcanal marked a crucial turning point in the Pacific War. No longer were the Japanese on the offensive. Some of the Japanese Emperor's best infantrymen, pilots, and seamen had been bested in close combat by the Americans and their Allies. There were years of fierce fighting ahead, but there was now no question of its outcome.

When the veterans of the 1st Marine Division were gathered in thankful reunion 20 years later, they received a poignant message from Guadalcanal. The sender was a legend to all "Canal" Marines, Honorary U.S. Marine Corps Sergeant Major Jacob C. Vouza. The Solomons native in his halting English said: "Tell them I love them all. Me old man now, and me no look good no more. But me never forget."

Sources

The basic source work for this booklet is the first volume in the series *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*, written by LtCol Frank O. Hough, Maj Verle E. Ludwig, and Henry I. Shaw, Jr. (Washington: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1958). Other books used in writing this narrative were: BGen Samuel B. Griffith II, *The Battle for Guadalcanal* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1963); Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift as told to Robert B. Asprey, *Once a Marine: The Memoirs of General A. A. Vandegrift, USMC* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964); Col Mitchell Paige, *A Marine Named Mitch* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975); Burke Davis, *Marine: The Life of Chesty Puller* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1962); George McMillan, *The Old Breed: A History of the 1st Marine Division in World War II* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1949); and Richard W. Johnston, *Follow Me!: The Story of the Second Marine Division in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1948).

The correspondence of General Vandegrift with General Holcomb and other senior Marines, held at the Marine Corps Historical Center, was helpful. Equally of value were conversations that the author had had with General Vandegrift after his retirement. In the course of his career as a Marine historian, the author has talked with other Guadalcanal veterans of all ranks; hopefully, this has resulted in a "feel" for the campaign, essential in writing such an overview.

The literature on the Guadalcanal operation is extensive. In addition to the books cited above, there are several which are personally recommended to the interested reader: Robert Leckie, *Helmet for My Pillow* (New York: Random House, 1957); Herbert Merillat, *Guadalcanal Remembered* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1982); John Miller, Jr., *The United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific; Guadalcanal, The First Offensive* (Washington: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1949); T. Grady Gallant, *On Valor's Side* (New York: Doubleday, 1963); Robert Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II* (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1952); Maj John L. Zimmerman, *The Guadalcanal Campaign* (Washington: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1949); RAdm Samuel E. Morrison, *The Struggle for Guadalcanal: History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol V* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1950); and a recent, comprehensive account, Richard B. Frank, *Guadalcanal* (New York: Random House, 1990).

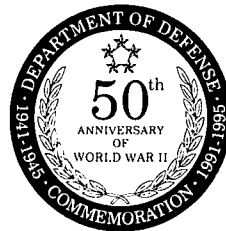


About the Author

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